



RFCI

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2008

TAMPA BAY CHAPTER of the

RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL INC

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PRESIDENT: FRED ENGELBRECHT

WEBSITE: www.rarefruit.org (CHARLES NOVAK)

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2nd SUNDAY OF THE MONTH @ 2:00 PM., 1:00 PM THIS MONTH
@ THE TAMPA GARDEN CLUB, 2629 BAYSHORE BLVD, TAMPA

NEXT MEETING: DEC 14 @ 1:00 PM

PROGRAM: THIS MONTH WE WILL BE CELEBRATING OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY & COVERED DISH SOCIAL AT THE TAMPA GARDEN CLUB, 2629 BAYSHORE BLVD. It is a covered dish potluck social and everyone is invited to bring something good to eat. We'll meet at 1:00. PLEASE NOTE this is 1:00 pm , NOT 2:00 pm, which is an hour earlier than our usual meeting time. Also, we'll have our usual plant raffle, so bring plants to donate. We will have a door prize & wine tasting, so all you little ol' wine makers, please bring your best wine. The club will provide ham & roasted and barbecued turkey for our main course. For additional information, see below. This is our 14th annual holiday party so all should try to come and help us celebrate. We'll have a blast!



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Nov-Dec 2008

By PAUL ZMODA

Our 'Honan Red' Oriental persimmon tree is giving us a few fabulous fruit every few days. Picked when they just give a little to finger pressure, they are further ripened indoors until quite soft. These persimmons are juicy, sweet and seedless; just cut in half and scoop out the flesh with a spoon and enjoy!

Pommelos are now ready – harvest one every now and then and write the date picked on its rind with a marking pen. After an aging period up to a week or two – taste them and you will soon determine if you should pick more often. They should be juicy, sweet & flavorful. You'll soon see why individual pommelos sell for up to \$4 or more at fruit markets.

I sold 12 pounds of star fruit at an Oriental market in Tampa. I had carefully selected the most ripened, perfect specimens. The market manager said they were over ripe, but bought them anyway. They prefer them under ripe (to me) and with the ribs showing a green color. I'd be willing to bet that these star fruit, especially the more sour varieties, would make excellent white wines like the Eden Vineyards in Alva, FL used to make.

The Mexican limes have seemed endless this year and are at last tapering off just as big, beautiful Meyer lemons and oodles of flavor-packed calamondins are almost perfectly ripened on the trees. We've been making so much fresh squeezed fruit juices lately. Why buy what you can make yourself?

I hauled a truck load of potting soil home and re-potted my entire collection of 'Captive' olive trees. Meanwhile, those planted in the orchard have never looked so healthy.

New plantings: Yuzu citrus, all kinds of cold weather salad greens and onions.

Programs/Events

- December 14:** Holiday Social **1 P.M.
January 10: Potluck picnic & tour at Palma Sola Botanical Park, Bradenton
January 11: Club Meeting
February 5-16: RFCI Horticulture Exhibit at the Florida State Fair
February 8: Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair. *No regular Club Meeting



The Holiday Social will be at the Tampa Garden Club, Sunday, December 14. The Festivities will begin with lunch at 1 P.M. Please bring a large covered dish (salads, vegetables, desserts, etc.) to accompany the turkeys, hams, pulled pork and stirfry provided by the club. The club will also provide the tableware and drinks. Members are invited to bring items to donate to the free raffle (plants, small gifts – possibly an item you received but can't use). We hope to see you there! **Several volunteers are needed to help set up for the Holiday Social.** If you are available to help, please arrive at the Tampa Garden Club about 11:30 A.M.

Tasting Table**November 2008**

Vega	Rice with Pidgeon Peas	Smoleny	Apple Pie
Coronel	Bibingka, brownies, biscotti	Millar	Brownies with nuts
Ferreira	Potato salad	Reddicliffe	Ambrosia salad
Alguire	Black beans & brown rice	Klingler	Bertroni beans
Kirby	Fried plantain	Newcombe	Carambolas
Champagne	Key lime cream pie	LaValette	Steam cup cakes
Scott	Black seedless grapes	Bigelow	Hungarian salad
Terenzi	Rum nut cake	Whitfield	Crackers
Crocker	Broccoli crab salad	Sweet	Bread & butter
Sawada	Key lime pecans, yakisoba, wagashi	Musgraves	Lemon creme cake
Shigemura	Turkey with gravy, cheesecake with blueberries, mango & orange confections		
Novak	Jambalaya with sausage, banana-orange nut bread, brownies, citrus platter, fruit juices		

Thanks to all the members who contributed to the Tasting Table!!

New Member:

Jose Diaz

New Port Richey

Citrus Celebration at the Florida State Fair: Sunday, February 8, 2009.

This will be our 8th year hosting this event at the Fair. It has been very popular with the public as it gives them the opportunity to sample many varieties of citrus. Please plan to help with this event. As our three main sources for fruit are no longer available, we are asking our members to donate citrus fruit (as many varieties as possible). If you have citrus to donate (or know of someone who will donate fruit) please contact Fred Engelbrecht, Charles Novak or Jimmy & Sally Lee.

Also, volunteers are needed to help prepare the fruit for sampling. A signup sheet will be available at the December meeting; or you may contact one of the members listed in the above paragraph. There will be more information in the January and February newsletters.

COLD PROTECTION FOR TROPICAL PLANTS

by CHARLES NOVAK

There are many methods to provide cold protection for tender tropical plants. A lot of the methods work very well but a lot of them only work at certain times and under certain conditions and we cannot look for global warming to help us; we're still going to get some of those freezing nights in the winter. There are some areas in this part of Florida that are more likely to see these freezing nights than other areas. Plant City, for instance, where Charles lives, gets colder nights than Tampa & Pinellas County.

So typically, when is the first frost and the last frost of the winter, and what part of the winter do you have to be at home to protect your trees? Most of us are growing plants in what we would call marginal areas for tropical trees. Mangos, for instance, are a tropical tree & if you're growing one in this area, you are in a marginal area for cold damage. 70 years ago mangos & other tropical trees were grown exclusively in this area. Since then we've had winters with temperatures down in the low 20s that killed mangos, West Indian avocados & other tropical fruit trees to the ground.

If we have a freeze and trees get damaged, how are we going to tell the extent of the damage? Statistics indicate, according to weathermen, that the first freezing night should be about the middle of January. However, we recommend getting prepared about Thanksgiving in central Florida and a little later in coastal areas like Pinellas County. We've had some real killers in this area. Several years ago, in December, we recorded 17 degrees in Plant City, 20 deg. in West Tampa. Those are killer temperatures for tropical trees without any protection.

Damage to a particular tree also depends on the species, the age of the tree, the health of the tree & the location in the yard due to the micro climate of the area. You may have a warm micro climate on the south side of a building, for

instance, or the south side of a dense oak tree which gets more than its share of sunshine during the day, or areas south of a large lake where the warmth of the water benefits the climate.

The first thing to do when a freeze is expected is to water the soil heavy around the sensitive plants; soak the ground with water. The wet soil will give off more heat than a dry soil.

Another thing to use is old fashioned Christmas lights, little colored incandescent lights on a string. Decorate your cold sensitive trees like they were Christmas trees and turn them on at freezing. The hot little lights will keep the tree warm. Of course there is a limit to the number of strings of Christmas lights we can accumulate and where to store them in the summer time and all the extension cords we would need to protect all our plants. But for just a couple of trees, use those Christmas lights.

Another approach is the use of container gardening. Trees that produce fruit when they're small can be grown in containers and brought in when a freeze is expected. Obviously there is a limit to how big a tree can be grown in a container & brought indoors. Most of us do not have a forklift or an empty garage available.

Another cold protection method is the use of mulch as in leaves, pine bark, cypress chips or soil. Before the first freeze, pile mulch around the trunk of the tree as high as possible but always cover the graft union so that if a freeze kills the tree, it will be protected below the top of the mulch and in spring when the sprouts come out, they will be from above the graft & the desired variety. Or build a chicken wire mesh basket around the tree and fill it with leaves. An alternative to banking soil around a tree above the graft is to actually bury the graft below grade & mulch above the graft through the winter, and in the spring fill in the hollow up to ground level covering the graft & actually putting the graft below ground. This is Florida, you know, and soil seldom freezes below grade as it does in northern climates.

You can also cover small & fairly large plants with a sheet or plastic, being careful to support the cover so it does not lay on the limbs, and also bring the cover all the way to the ground so that ground heat is available to keep the covered area warm. The only place a covered plant can get warmth is from the ground, unless we provide lights or heaters under the cover.

Of course the ultimate protection for plants, as several of our members have done, is to build a greenhouse or conservatory. You need the heat from the ground to keep the plants from freezing. Charles' conservatory, which Jerry Amyot convinced him to build, is 15'x30'x18' high, and he is growing all kinds of cold sensitive fruiting plants in it. The walls in the conservatory go all the way to the ground but Charles still has to protect the plants in there because, except for eliminating wind, it still gets as cold in there without adding heat, as the surrounding air. He uses two propane heaters on cold nights. He gets two nights' use out of one tank and it's about \$18 a tank, so a conservatory is not cheap to operate in the winter.

There is also a liquid that contains silicon which can be used to water the plant roots. The plant absorbs the silicon and gets from 4 to 8 degrees protection from the cold.

Charles also uses a misting system for cold protection which he has been using for many years. He's on a well so he can use the well water for misting his plants and doesn't have to pay a sewage fee, as many of us would do who are on city water. On a very cold night the trees get covered with ice; they are like icicles standing there, but the mist continually freezing on the plants keeps them at 32 degrees so they don't get that low 20 degrees or whatever the air is. If the plant will take 32 degrees, there may be some limb breakage from the ice but the plant will survive. But we need to remember if we use a pump to produce a mist and we have a power failure, we also lose the misting. The process of turning water to ice releases energy just so long as the water is running and ice is continually being made. If you lose power, the ice

temperature can go down to 20 degrees or whatever.

After a freeze when you're checking your plants for damage and find limbs where all the leaves are turning brown and falling off, the limb is probably still alive. A living limb has a way of dropping off dead leaves. Each leaf has a separation point and when it dies, the plant releases it at that point. If the leaves turn brown and still hang on to the limbs, it means the limb has died and it cannot exercise that release mechanism. Also if a limb or trunk's bark splits, you may be getting dieback and the limb may die back to the extent of the split in the bark. Likewise, do not prune damaged trees until they begin to leaf out again so you can tell for sure what is damaged and what is still alive, and after the danger of another freeze has passed in the spring.

Trees that are growing in the ground and are covered for the freezing weather in normally sunshiny areas must have the cover removed when the freeze danger is past; air temperatures rise and the bright sun will cook the plant.



RECIPE: KEY LIME PIE

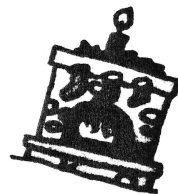
2 egg yolks @ room temperature
1 can sweetened condensed milk
½ cup key lime juice
grated lime of one small lime
1 pie crust shell
2 egg whites @ room temperature
½ tsp cream of tartar
1/3 cup sugar

Beat egg yolks until lemony yellow and smooth. Beat in condensed milk and then juice and rind. Pour into pie shell. Make meringue and cover pie, sealing it to crust.

Meringue: Beat egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Add sugar, a tablespoon at a time, while whipping until stiff peaks form. Bake @ 300 deg.F for 15-20 minutes or until meringue turns brown. Cool and then chill before serving.

Notes from the President :

Our own Charles Novak gave us a timely and important lecture on Cold Protection. In spite of talk about Global Warming, we have experienced cold days already in the last week of October, so we received valuable information. Our thanks also to all those generous members who contribute to our tasting table.



Our next meeting will be our annual Christmas Party and we are looking forward to enjoying a party of fellowship and good cheer. Please note that the Christmas Party starts one hour early, at 1:00 P.M., instead of the usual time.

We have received an invitation from the Manatee Rare Fruit Council to attend their meeting on January 10, 2009 at the new Palma Sola Botanical Park , located at 9800 17th Ave NW in Bradenton. The Manatee Club will be hosting a potluck picnic and tours of the many fruit trees planted at Palma Sola.

We need to know how many members will be attending this meeting in Bradenton, so that we can advise the Manatee Club accordingly. You will be traveling there by yourself.

Please sign up at the next meeting or contact any Board member if you intend to attend.

Fred Engelbrecht

OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The editors of the monthly newsletter are indicated near the top of the first page. They are Bob Heath, Paula Hardwick, Charles & Linda Novak. In addition, we get Notes from the President and input from Paul Zmoda, who writes What's Happening every month. As of August 2009, Bob Heath, who will have been working on the newsletter for 25 years at that time, and his daughter and secretary, Paula Hardwick, are passing the responsibility on to another member or other members. One of our members has already offered his expertise and we can only hope at this time that others will also come forward. If not, come September 2009, there will not be a newsletter. We are very confident this will not occur. Bob & Paula will work with whomever through the next 8 or 9 months to provide a smooth transition. Please discuss this with Bob Heath at the next meeting or call him at your convenience. Thank you.

The Horticulture Vocational Program of Falkenburg Road Jail is in need of non-working and/or no longer needed Gardening equipment (such as power equipment, gardening tools).
Examples: Lawn Mowers, Rakes and shovels in need of new handles, etc.

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NOVEMBER PLANT EXCHANGE

PLANT	DONOR	WINNER
Jelly Fig	Bob Heath	Tony Ferreira
Surinam Cherry	"	Ron Shigemura
Surinam Cherry	"	?
Chaya Spinach	"	Laura Massie
Chaya Spinach	"	?
Red Passion Fruit	"	Kris Aguire
Red Passion Fruit	"	?
Pineapple	"	Alan Male
Papaya	"	L. Hezda
Orange Berry	"	?
Red Guava	Charles Novak	Andre Colon
Red Guava	"	Keith Kirby
Red Guava	"	Jesse Suarez
Red Guava	"	Sonia Saceda-Bigelow
Red Guava	"	"
Red Guava	"	Bob Heath
Citrus Tangelos	Linda Novak	Teresa Klingler
Citrus Tangelos	"	?
Citrus Tangelos	"	?
Banana Praying Hand	Paul Branesky	Nancy McCormack
Banana Praying Hand	"	?
Sweet Potato	"	Carol Gamboni
Sweet Potato	"	Sonia Saceda-Bigelow
Sweet Potato	"	"
Sweet Potato	"	?
Red Papaya	Sal Russo	Laura Massie
Yucca	"	Tony Ferreira
Sugar Cane Red	Vega	Alberto Berrios
Sugar Cane Red	"	Lule Helde
Pineapple	Lillian Smoleny	Cora Coronel
Pineapple	"	Vega
Avocado Fruit	Sally Lee	Lillian Smoleny
Avocado Fruit	"	"
Avocado Fruit	"	Lule Helde
Crown of Thorn	S. Lavalette	J.A. Oliver
Dracaena	"	?
Plumbago	"	Marilyn Whitfield
Sugar Apple	Tony Ferreira	Ed Musgrave
Tabebula Ipe Tree	Beth Reddicliffe	Laura Massie
Tabebula Ipe Tree	"	Vic Gamboni
Carambola	Ed Musgrave	Mike Sweet

If your name was misspelled or omitted from the raffle list above, don't blame us. In some cases the writing was hard to decipher; in other cases completely illegible. If you want your name to appear properly spelled, please write carefully. But in any event, please sign the list. Thanks. The Editors

To assist with germination and the establishment of a new plant, it is often helpful to soak seeds in water for 12-24 hours before being sown in a compost that will provide adequate aeration, sufficient water-holding capacity, a neutral acidity, alkalinity reaction and sufficient phosphate. Thus a "sowing" or "seed" compost should be used.

Before choosing a pot, pan or tray decide how much seed is to be sown: the container should be large enough to allow the seedlings space to develop to the size at which they are to be pricked out.

Heap the container with compost and then, to ensure it is evenly distributed and there are no air locks, very lightly firm it to

the corners and base using the fingers. Do not compact the compost.

Using a sawing action, strike off the compost with a presser board or other piece of wood so that it is level with the top of the container. Then with a presser board that fits into the container, lightly and evenly firm the compost to $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in below the rim, ensuring that the surface is level.

The container is now prepared for sowing. The seeds should be sown evenly over the surface either by sowing large seeds one by one or gently shaking small seeds direct from the packet. When shaking, keep the packet low over the compost to prevent the seeds being unevenly distributed. If the seeds are

very fine it is easier to distribute them evenly, and see where they are sown, if they are mixed thoroughly with some dry fine sand. Sow the seeds by shaking across the container, using about half the seeds; then turn the container through 90 degrees and sow the rest of the seeds in the same way.

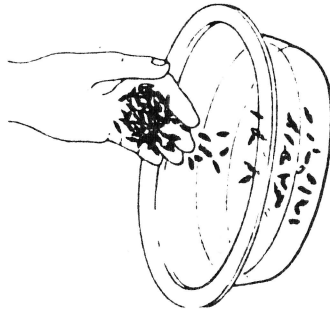
Gently shake some compost over the container through a $\frac{1}{8}$ in sieve so that an even and uniform layer covers the seeds. As a general rule seeds do not need to be covered by compost deeper than their own thickness.

Finally label the seeds and water them in by standing the container in a shallow bath of water so that the water moves up by capillary action. Do not stand the container

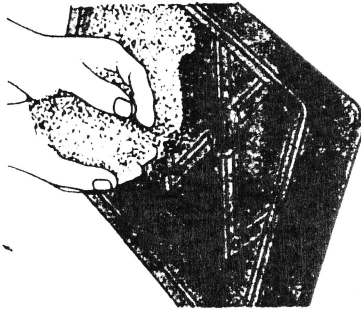
in so much water that it overflows the rim onto the seeds and compost. After watering stand out to drain.

Alternatively water the compost from above, using a watering can with a fine rose. Start pouring the water away from the container and once an even flow is attained direct it over the seeds; similarly, to stop, move the water away from the container and then stop the flow, so that no drops fall on to the compost.

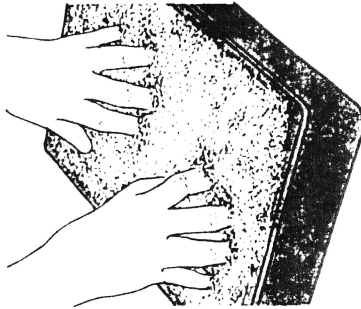
Cover the container with a piece of glass and place in a warm dark place, for example an airing cabinet. Otherwise, cover with glass and a sheet of paper and leave in any warm (21 C/70 F) environment.



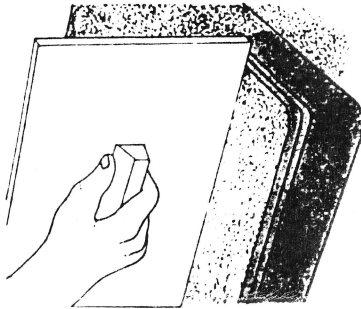
1 Soak large seeds in water for 12-24 hours before sowing in compost.



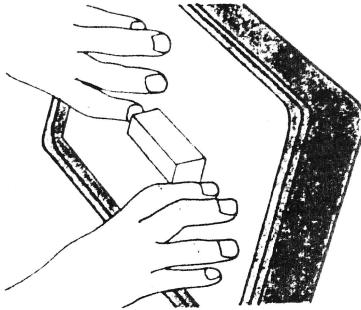
2 Fill a container with compost until it is heaped above the rim.



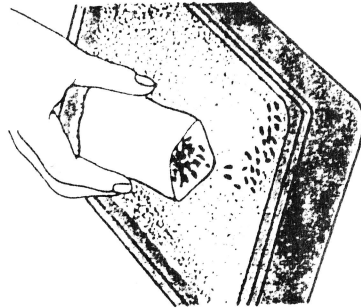
3 Firm the compost into the corners and base using the tips of the fingers.



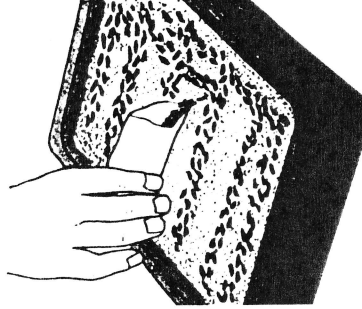
4 Strike off the compost using a sawing action until it is level with the rim.



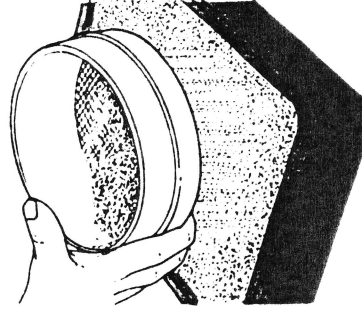
5 Firm the compost lightly to $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ in below the rim using a presser board.



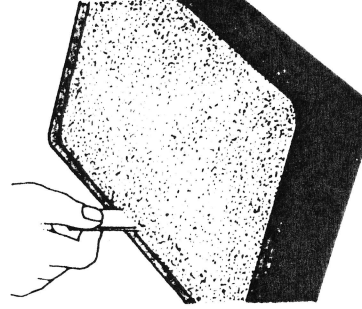
6 Sow half the seeds across the container, keeping hand low to prevent bouncing.



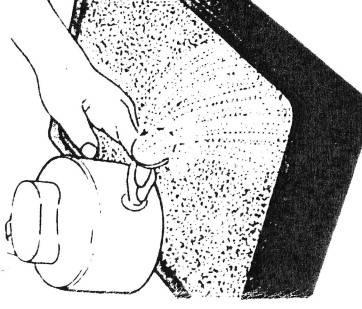
7 Turn container through 90 degrees. Sow the remaining seeds.



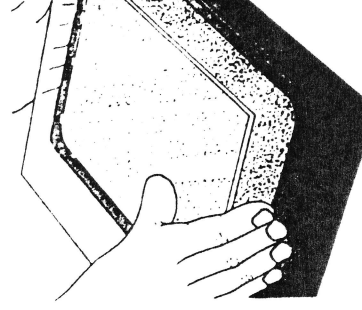
8 Cover the seeds by sifting on compost, keeping the sieve low over the seeds.



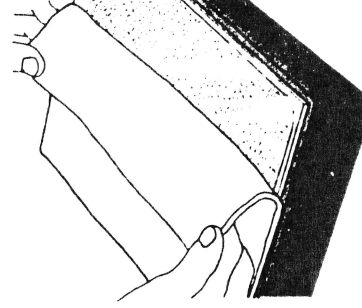
9 Label the seeds with their full name and date of sowing.



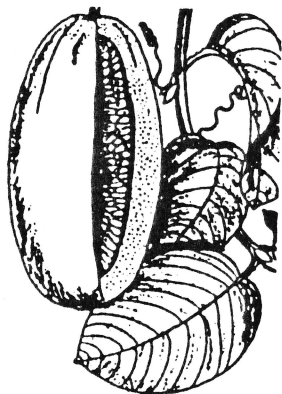
10 Water in the seeds from above the compost, using a can with a fine rose.



11 Cover the container with a pane of glass to keep the seeds moist and warm.



12 Place a sheet of paper over the glass to minimize temperature fluctuations.

149. *Passiflora quadrangularis* - Giant granadilla

Evergreen vine, native to tropical America. Leaves 4 to 8 inches long. Fragrant white flowers are about 3 inches across. Flowers can also be pink or violet inside. Yellowish-green fruit may be 8 to 12 inches long. Whitish pulp is eaten fresh, used in beverages and desserts. Flavor is sub-acid. New plants are started by seed.

152. *Coccoloba uvifera* - Sea-grape

Evergreen tree to about 20 feet, native to Tropical America. Its round, leathery, glossy leaves are up to 8 inches in diameter. New growth has reddish veins and tinge. White flowers are produced in racemes. Its purplish fruit resemble grapes in size and bunches. Pulp is eaten fresh or used for jellies. Plants are used for landscape purposes and are very salt tolerant - thriving on coastal dunes. Plants are started by seed, cuttings and layering.

A Very Merry Christmas To All



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